

## **Talking Points** **The Criteria and Calculations for** **Absolute Ratings and Improvement Ratings** **(K-2 grades only schools)**

*These talking points present general information on the calculation of Absolute and Improvement Ratings for schools enrolling students only in grades K-2. To obtain more technical and specific information on school and district ratings, refer to the Annual Accountability Manual available on the EOC Web site at [www.sceoc.org](http://www.sceoc.org).*

- South Carolina's education accountability system centers around one fundamental belief: **ALL children can achieve.**
- The system uses academic achievement standards to push schools and students toward higher performance and focuses on improving teaching and learning so students are equipped with a strong academic foundation.
- Every student is held to the same high standards, and every school and district is accountable for each of its students.
- The system is designed to evaluate annually the progress of each school and school district.
- The 2010 goal states, "South Carolina's student achievement will be ranked in the top half of states nationally. To achieve this goal, we must become one of the five fastest improving systems in the country." The goal is used to establish expectations.
- Continuous improvement is the key to meeting South Carolina's 2010 achievement goal. The ratings system is constructed to increase in rigor over time. The target for individual student performance established by the State Board of Education is a score of Proficient. Proficient means the student has met expectations and is well prepared for work at the next grade.

### **Basic information:**

- There are about 25 schools in South Carolina serving students only in grades two or below.
- Student achievement tests are not administered by the state of South Carolina to students in kindergarten through second grade. Ratings for these schools use research-based factors that correlate to future student success including student attendance, pupil-teacher ratios, parent involvement, external accreditation and early-childhood professional development.
- Each K-2 only school receives two performance ratings and notification of AYP:

**Absolute Rating** – based on the school's level of performance on measures of research-based factors associated with student success during the school year on which the report card is based.

**Improvement Rating** – based on the school's progress toward attaining and/or maintaining higher levels of performance on measures of research-based factors associated with student success from year to year.

**Adequate Yearly Progress** – As required by the United States Department of Education through passage of the No Child Left Behind legislation, a notice about the school's status of adequate yearly progress is provided. AYP specifies statewide targets for all students and for each student demographic subgroups: racial/ethnic, economic, disability, limited English proficiency, and migrant status. **(Contact the State Department of Education for Information on AYP.)**

- Five terms are used in the ratings to describe the level of a school's performance:

**Excellent** – School performance substantially exceeds the standards for progress toward the 2010 SC Performance Goal.

**Good** – School performance exceeds the standards for progress toward the 2010 SC Performance Goal.

**Average** – School performance meets the standards for progress toward the 2010 SC Performance Goal.

**Below Average** – School is in jeopardy of not meeting the standards for progress toward the 2010 SC Performance Goal.

**Unsatisfactory** – School performance fails to meet the standards for progress toward the 2010 SC Performance Goal.

#### **What criteria are used to calculate ratings for K-2 only schools?**

- Average daily student attendance
- Pupil-teacher ratios
- Level of parental involvement (parents attending conferences)
- Accreditation that is early childhood specific awarded to the school by an external educational association or organization
- Professional development time devoted exclusively to knowledge and skills of working with young children (less than eight years of age).

#### **Criterion to be added beginning 2005**

- An environmental measure for program improvement (e.g. Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale – Revised)

#### **How are Absolute Ratings calculated for K-2 only schools?**

- Ratings are calculated using a mathematical formula that results in an index.

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Points Assigned</b>				
	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Student Attendance</b>	98% or greater	96-97.99%	94-95.99%	92-93.99%	Less than 92%
<b>Pupil-Teacher Ratio</b>	21 or less	22-25	26-30	31-32	Greater than 32
<b>Parent Involvement</b>	90% or more	75-89 %	60-74%	30-59%	29% or less
<b>External Accreditation</b>	NAEYC or Montessori	SDE and SACS-early childhood	SDE	Conducting self-study	Not pursuing accreditation
<b>Professional Development</b>	More than 1.5 days	1 to 1.5 days	1 day	.5 to .9 day	Less than .5 day

**Step 1** – Calculate the index by adding the points (weights or values) assigned to each rating category (table above) and dividing the total points by the number of criteria used to calculate the ratings.

■ The resulting index determines the school's Absolute Rating as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Below Average</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>
<b>2004</b>	3.5 and above*	3.1-3.4*	2.7-3.0	2.3-2.6	Below 2.3
<b>2005</b>	3.6 and above*	3.2-3.5*	2.8-3.1	2.4-2.7	Below 2.4
<b>2006</b>	3.7 and above*	3.3-3.6*	2.9-3.2	2.5-2.8	Below 2.5
<b>2007</b>	3.8 and above*	3.4-3.7*	3.0-3.3	2.6-2.9	Below 2.6
<b>2008</b>	3.9 and above*	3.5-3.8*	3.1-3.4	2.7-3.0	Below 2.7
<b>2009</b>	4.0 and above*	3.6-3.9*	3.2-3.5	2.8-3.1	Below 2.8
<b>2010</b>	4.1 and above*	3.7-4.0*	3.3-3.6	2.9-3.2	Below 2.9
<b>2011</b>	4.2 and above*	3.8-4.1*	3.4-3.7	3.0-3.3	Below 3.0
<b>2012</b>	4.3 and above*	3.9-4.2*	3.5-3.8	3.1-3.4	Below 3.1
<b>2013</b>	4.4 and above*	4.0-4.3*	3.6-3.9	3.2-3.5	Below 3.2
<b>2014</b>	4.5 and above*	4.1-4.4*	3.7-4.0	3.3-3.6	Below 3.3

\* School must meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) criteria for all students.

**Step 2** – For schools with an Excellent or Good Absolute Rating index, determine if Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for *all* students has been met.

Ratings will decrease one level for schools with an Absolute Rating of Excellent or Good, but which do not meet AYP for *all* students. For example, if a school had an index of 3.6 in 2004 but did not make AYP for *all* students, its rating would be lowered from Excellent to Good. Or if a school in 2004 had an index of 3.1 but did not make AYP for *all* students, its rating would be lowered from Good to Average.

**Here is a sample calculation of an Absolute Rating for a K-2 only school:**

Student Attendance is 92%	2 points
Pupil-Teacher Ratio is 26 to 1	3 points
Parent Involvement is 65%	3 points
External Accreditation from SDE	3 points
Professional Development is .5 day	2 points
Total Points	13 points
Divided by 5 (number of criteria)	÷ 5 =
	2.6 Index

**Absolute Rating: Below Average**

**Note:** This school's index of 2.6 is a Below Average Absolute Rating through the year 2007. From 2008 through 2014, a 2.6 index becomes Unsatisfactory.

**Met AYP? Yes/No**

If this school's index would have been an Excellent or Good Rating, AYP must be met for *all* students to maintain the rating. If AYP is not met for all students, the Excellent or Good Rating decreases one level.

### How are Improvement Ratings calculated for K-2 only schools?

- The improvement ratings are calculated using a mathematical formula that results in an index.
- The index is calculated by subtracting the school's Absolute Rating index for the prior year from the Absolute Rating index for the year on which the report card is based.
- The resulting index determines the Improvement Rating in accordance with the following values:

Rating	Improvement Index
Excellent	0.4 or greater
Good	0.3
Average	0.1-0.2
Below Average	0.0
Unsatisfactory	-0.1 or less

### Here is a sample calculation of an Improvement Rating for a K-2 only school:

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Absolute Rating index for school year for which report card is based:} \quad 2.4 \\ \text{Absolute Rating index for the prior school year:} \quad - 2.2 \\ \hline \text{Difference} = \quad 0.2 \\ \text{Improvement Rating:} \quad \text{Average} \end{array}$$

### Adjustments to the Improvement Rating:

- Improvement Ratings for K-2 only schools sustaining high achievement are established as follows:
  - Schools maintaining an Excellent Absolute Rating for two consecutive years receive a Good Improvement Rating, and if the school's Improvement Index for all students is a positive number (e.g., greater than zero), the school's Improvement Rating will be elevated to Excellent.
  - Schools achieving an Absolute Rating index of 4.8 or higher for two consecutive years will be awarded an Excellent Improvement Rating.